

# doing a better job

## MERCHANDISING

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### How Can You Create a Good Ad If You Don't Know the Ingredients?

A Supreme Court justice, asked to rule on the acceptability of a rather risqué motion picture, was forced to admit that although he couldn't define pornography, he certainly knew it when he saw it.

As a registered Angus breeder, you need to be in this situation with regard to advertising. You may not be a student of advertising and able to define it precisely, but as a buyer of advertising you are dollars ahead if you are able to recognize a good advertisement when you see it.

Good advertising, like a good day, comes in all forms. But almost all good ads are composed of five basic ingredients. And when the five ingredients are combined properly, they work jointly to accomplish five basic tasks. This makes for an effective ad. By knowing and applying the "5 plus 5" standard to the advertising you create, approve and pay for, you will assure yourself of obtaining more effective and cost-efficient ads.

The five basic ingredients or building blocks of a print advertisement are: 1) dominant illustration, 2) headline, 3) persuasive body copy, 4) consistent signature or logo, and 5) an overall distinctive look.

The five tasks every ad should ac-

### Basic Ingredients of an Ad:

Dominant Illustration  
Headline  
Persuasive Body Copy  
Consistent Signature or Logo  
An Overall Distinctive Look

### Tasks of Every Ad:

Get Attention  
Arouse Interest  
Create Desire  
Build Conviction  
Ask for Action

complish are: 1) get attention, 2) arouse interest, 3) create desire, 4) build conviction, and 5) ask for action.

The illustration is probably the single most important element in most ads. Its purpose is not only to show the product or demonstrate how the product is used, but the illustration must grab the reader's attention and interest him or her enough to want to find out more. Too many cattle ads feature dull, posed snapshots of cattle, very often with several of them spread across the page. The illustration should be big, it should be good and it should compel the reader to stop, look and want to learn more.

Like the illustration, the headline should get attention and create interest. Moreover, it should complement the illustration—that is, the headline should offer some indication of what the illustration is about. Then, either directly or indirectly, the headline should promise a benefit—something the buyer can gain or profit from if he purchases your cattle. Just putting the name of your herd or your herd bull at the top of the ad does not make a good headline. Neither do trite expressions like "A Star Is Born," "Par For The Course," or "Here's The Beef."

If the illustration and headline do their job properly, then the body copy becomes important. Good copy tells a story in a nutshell and highlights the best sales points of a product. Use it to build conviction in the reader. Convince him he should buy from you—back up the

claims of your headline with proof. Show why your cattle are valuable and guarantee them as much as you can. Also tell why it is important to buy now. Make the reader want to act and then indicate what you want the reader to do—telephone you, write for your sale catalog, etc.

Your logo or signature makes it easy for the reader to act. It features the name of the person to contact, the telephone number, address, and even directions to the farm. The logo should also be distinctive, attractive and identify your herd at a glance. In effect, it is your trademark. It should be designed by a professional, and then be used in everything you print—ads, brochures, letterheads, etc.

Finally, every ad you produce should be recognizable as "yours." Each ad should have the same style and look.

A herd loses recognition when each ad it runs has a different "look" from all the others. A consistent, distinctive look is difficult to achieve, but worth the effort.

If each of the five elements of the ad does its job properly, then the ad will achieve its five goals to get attention, arouse interest, develop conviction, create desire, and ask (hopefully get) the prospect to act.

An advertiser that you may be familiar with, and one that I have admired for some time, is the company that makes and sells Ritchie water fountains. They follow most all these rules in nearly every ad they produce. The ads are not "fancy" or "showy," but the Ritchie ads are in the top group on readership—time after time.

Study these ads and the advertising produced by other good companies, large and small, that attracts your attention. Become conscious of the ads you read, and try to determine **why** you read them and why you didn't read others. In all the ads you study, and especially in the ads you produce, apply the "5 plus 5" standard.

With practice you will not only be able to recognize a good ad when you see it, but become able to define it and understand why it works well. **AJ**

